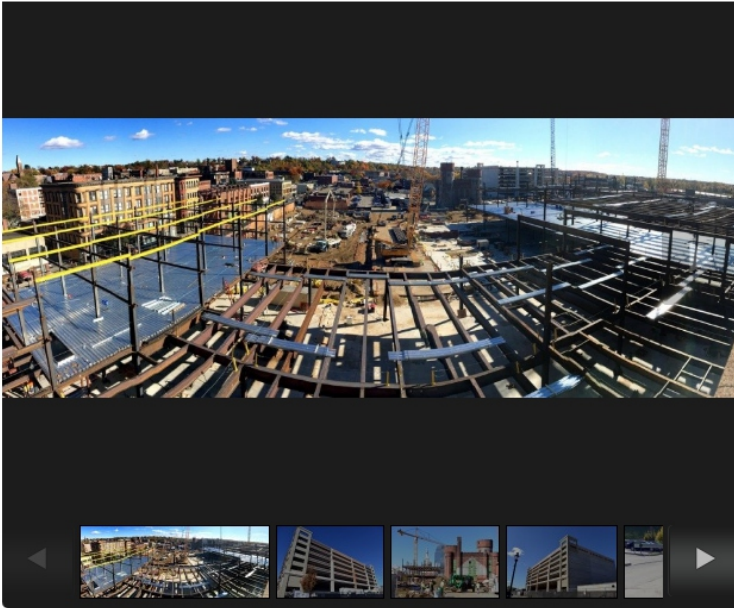


Massachusetts unemployment rate drops to 2.8%, lowest since 2000



11/4/2016 -Springfield- Construction of the MGM Springfield casino project is moving along. This is a view looking South. (Don Treeger / The Republican)



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The Massachusetts unemployment rate dropped to 2.8 percent in December, marking the sixth consecutive month the rate has declined.

The last time the state's unemployment rate was at 2.8 percent was in December 2000, according to a press release issued Thursday by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

Over the year, Massachusetts added 75,000 jobs.



Springfield unemployment falls to 4.8 percent
 Springfield's unemployment rate was almost twice as high, at 8.4 percent, a year ago.

Local unemployment numbers are not yet available for December. But as of November, unemployment in Springfield fell to 4.8 percent, its lowest point since October 2001.

Preliminary estimates from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show Massachusetts added 6,600 jobs in December. The November job gain had an upward revision, with the state adding 7,000 jobs compared to the previously published 5,800 job gain estimate.



Massachusetts economy nears 'full capacity'

Gateway Cities like Springfield, Holyoke and much of the rest of Western Massachusetts continue to lag.

Statewide jobs numbers are adjusted for seasonal changes in the economy. That means these job gains are in addition to regular seasonal hiring in December by stores and delivery companies.

If statisticians take into account those who have stopped looking for work and those who are working part-time but would rather work full-time, the Massachusetts unemployment rate is higher at 8.8 percent, [according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

Other statistics from the statewide report

- **Unemployment rate down in 2016:** At 2.8 percent, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is down 2.1 percent over the year from 4.9 percent in December 2015.
- **Fewer unemployed:** There were 73,300 fewer unemployed residents and 112,900 more employed residents over the year.
- **More people working or looking for work:** The state's labor force participation rate - the total number of residents 16 or older who worked or were unemployed and actively sought work in the last four weeks -- is 64.7 percent. Over the year, the labor force participation rate has increased two-tenths of a percentage point compared to December 2015.
- **Massachusetts versus the nation:** Massachusetts' unemployment rate has remained lower than the national rate since April 2008. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the December national rate at 4.7 percent.
- **Improved since the Great Recession:** Since the statewide rate peaked at 8.8 percent in September 2009, there are now 335,600 more Massachusetts residents employed and 202,700 fewer residents unemployed. The labor force increased by 133,000.
- **Number of Massachusetts workers:** The December estimates show just over 3.5 million Massachusetts residents were employed and 101,300 were unemployed, for a total labor force of 3,601,400.

Job gains and losses by sector of the economy

- **Education and Health Services** added 4,600 (+0.6%) jobs in the month. Over the year, Education and Health Services gained 26,800 (+3.5%) jobs.
- **Construction** gained 3,700 (+2.5%) jobs over the month. Over the year, Construction added 8,800 (+6.1%) jobs.
- **Professional, Scientific and Business Services** gained 1,200 (+0.2%) jobs during the month. Over the year, Professional, Scientific and Business Services added 18,800 (+3.5%) jobs.
- **Information** gained 1,000 (+1.1%) jobs in December. For the year, Information added 700 (+0.8%) jobs.
- **Leisure and Hospitality** gained 900 (+0.3%) jobs over the month. In 2016, Leisure and Hospitality added 8,900 (+2.5%) jobs.
- **Financial Activities** added 800 (+0.4%) jobs in the month. Over the year, Financial Activities gained 4,400 (+2.0%) jobs.
- **Other Services** added 800 (+0.6%) jobs in December. For the year, Other Services lost 100 (-0.1%) jobs.
- **Manufacturing** added 300 (+0.1%) jobs over the month. During the year, Manufacturing gained 900 (+0.4%) jobs.
- **Trade, Transportation and Utilities** lost 2,000 (-0.4%) jobs over the month. For the year, Trade, Transportation and Utilities added 3,000 (+0.5%) jobs.
- **Government lost** 4,700 (-1.0%) jobs in December. For the year, Government gained 2,800 (+0.6%) jobs.